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SUBJECT: SOUTHEAST TURKEY PRESS SUMMARY FOR MAY 4, 2006

This is the Southeastern Turkey press summary for May 04, 2006. Please note that Turkish press reports often contain errors or exaggerations; AmConsulate Adana does not vouch for the accuracy of the reports summarized here.

POLITICAL, SECURITY, HUMAN RIGHTS

ZAMAN / EVRENSEL / OZGUR GUNDEM / RADIKAL / YENI SAFAK: Van's Third Heavy Penalty Court will start prosecuting defendants of the November 9 Semdinli case today. Many politicians, representatives of civil society members, lawmakers and journalists went to Van to watch the court hearing. Mehmet Elkutmis, Chairperson of Turkish Parliamentary Commission for Human Rights, a commission member, and Esat Canan, Hakkari deputy from CHP also went to Van. One of the papers reminded that the indictment of the case was previously prepared by recently dismissed Van Prosecutor Ferhat Sarikaya.

ZAMAN / RADIKAL / YENI SAFAK: A bomb attack at a school bus, which was carrying children of military personnel and a car that was protecting the school bus, wounded 8 soldiers, 11 students and two women in Hakkari. The incident was reportedly caused by a remote controlled bomb which was reportedly placed by the PKK. Police suspecting 16 people have detained them.

ZAMAN / RADIKAL / YENI SAFAK / HURRIYET: European Parliament's EU-Turkey Joint-Parliamentary Commission (JPC) Chairperson Joost Lagendijk, who came to Turkey to attend 56th meeting of JPC at the Turkish Parliament, said that European parliament was monitoring the Semdinli case closely. Lagendijk also said that expelling of the Prosecutor Ferhat Sarikaya from profession sent wrong messages to the EU. Lagendijk will come to Diyarbakir on May 6.

RADIKAL / ZAMAN: PM Erdogan, who went to Adiyaman and Sanliurfa for the AKP provincial party congresses held there, also attended opening ceremonies of 33 factories yesterday in Adiyaman.

BOLGE / EKSPRES: A flurry of speculations about candidacy of AKP delegate Omer Kaya (see press summary 05/03), against current chairperson Abdullah Dogru, has been dismissed by Kaya's announcement that he would not be running for chairmanship in May 6 elections of AKP party organization in Adana.

ZAMAN / BOLGE / SABAH (GUNEY): Police conducted a crackdown on a criminal gang in Adana which issued fake diplomas and driving licenses to people. A total of 9 people have been detained.

BOLGE: An ongoing feud between two families in Mardin's Kiziltepe district has been ended by efforts of the Kiziltepe Mayor Cihan Sancar.

SABAH (GUNEY) / HURRIYET (CUKUROVA): Sanliurfa Governor Yusuf Yavascan and his wife attended a picnic held for the children of a state orphanage in Sanliurfa.

HURRIYET (CUKUROVA): Hakkari Governor Ayhan Nasuhbeyoglu said that a budget worth of 23 million YTL has been allocated to Hakkari under "Support for Infrastructural Needs of Villages" project. The project envisages that such investments will be finished within one year.

SABAH (GUNEY): A group comprised of instructors and students of a Turkish Language Department of Syria's Aleppo University paid a visit to Hatay Governor Ahmet Kayhan. A Turkish instructor told Kayhan that Turkish language gained popularity among Syrian students.

SABAH (GUNEY): A smuggler of ancient artifacts has been caught in Sanliurfa. Reportedly, a photo taken with terrorist leader has been found on this person. It is found out that the smuggler was convicted of aiding and abetting the PKK and served a three months prison sentence.

OZGUR GUNDEM: Youth Initiative for Apo made a call to the people to protest Erdoagan's Diyarbakir visit on May 7. (Note: Apo is a nickname of jailed PKK leader Abdullah Ocalan. End Note.) Youth Initiative further said that Erdogan will be solely responsible for developments that may take place upon his visit to Diyarbakir.

EVRENSEL / OZGUR GUNDEM: DTP Co-Chairpersons will attend the opening of Iraqi Kurdish Regional Parliament's opening on May 7 in Iraq.

OZGUR GUNDEM: Mardin's Nusaybin district mayor and DTP members delivered invitations to people for a May 13 concert that would be held to support daily Kurdish newspaper called Azadiya Welat (Freedom of Homeland).

OZGUR GUNDEM: The DIHA news agency journalists, who have been detained and arrested on February 18 as they were watching the demonstration activities carried out in Mersin to protest arrest of Abdullah Ocalan in 1999, will be prosecuted in Adana on charges of being members of the terrorist organization. The first trial date is May 9. Separately, Mersin DTP provincial chairperson Ali Bozan, who has been released to stand trial later, has been arrested again upon when the prosecutor appealed the decision to release him. Meanwhile, Kars DTP provincial chairperson has filed a complaint against the director and prosecutor of the jail in Erzurum for banning the inmates from speaking Kurdish among themselves because of the reported difficulty it caused in controlling the inmates. Separately, a senior member of DTP in Mardin's Kiziltepe district has been detained by Anti-Terror Branch members.

OZGUR GUNDEM: International Amnesty Organization prepared a media briefing on incidents that developed after the November 9 Semdinli bombing in Hakkari. The briefing reminded that alleged violations committed by the security officers in Turkey have not been investigated properly and Turkey has been convicted at the European Court many times because of that.

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